



Rivers Historian

Fall 2005

A Journal of the Three Rivers Museum

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Ghost Stories Caravan Expanded

THREE RIVERS MUSEUM will expand its Ghost Stories Caravan Tour this year, devoting two evenings to the event. The Tour will be conducted on Friday, October 21 and Saturday, October 22, 2005 starting at 5:30 both evenings.

Tour participants will gather at Three Rivers Museum where the Caravan outing will begin. Following a presentation from Roger Bell, chairman of Three Rivers Museum, the group will then drive to sites around Muskogee where ghostly legends reside.

One of the popular stops from last year's Ghost Stories tour will be repeated again this year. A visit to Atalou Lodge Museum on the Bacone College campus gives participants an opportunity to hear about the dancing Kachina Dolls. These dolls are said to be representative of supernatural beings in the Hopi religion.

A new stop on this year's tour will be a home in Muskogee that has seen a continual change of ownership over the years. Mysterious happenings at this federalist style home keep the house frequently up for sale!

The History Explorers Ghost Stories



John Timothy, Director of Atalou Lodge, explains the mysterious Kachina Doll collection.

Caravan Tour was featured on Discover Oklahoma, a television program produced by the state's tourism department. The program aired on September 24 in Tulsa and Oklahoma City and featured ghost tours being offered around the state in October.

Last year's Ghost Stories Tour drew rave reviews from the nearly 70 participants who tramped through cemeteries in the dark. Many plan to attend again this year.

Reservations are required for this tour. You can reserve your space by calling the museum at 918-686-6624.



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Museum News Briefs

Museum Will Offer Football Day

THREE RIVERS MUSEUM will present a special day about area sports again this year. The date for this event will be Saturday, November 19 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the museum in the Midland Valley Depot at 220 Elgin in Muskogee.

With an emphasis on football in the Three Forks area, the event's special guests will be Rick Bryan from Coweta and Preston Carpenter from Broken Arrow. Bryan was an All-American player at Oklahoma University and played for the Atlanta Falcons.

Carpenter played for Muskogee Central High School, 1951-52, the University of Arkansas, then several NFL teams. While with the Pittsburgh Steelers, Carpenter was elected to the Pro Bowl.

We will also have a drawing for an OU football signed by All-American Teddy Lehman from Fort Gibson.

The *Phoenix* sports writers have written articles about area sports history and will be involved in our Football Day.

Members of the 1950s Central High School teams will be special guests with some surprise photos, game film, and a clip of team members on the Ed Sullivan Show.

Sports enthusiasts will want to join fellow fans for Three Rivers Museum's Football Day. The cost for the event will be \$4 per person, not including lunch offered for sale by Chet's Hot Dogs.

Remembering Kit Stewart

THREE RIVERS MUSEUM lost a good friend in Katherine "Kit" Stewart at her passing away on August 2, 2005.

A long-time member of the Board of Directors for Three Rivers Museum, Kit was an enthusiastic supporter of this project who worked tirelessly to see the dream come to reality.

Kit was also involved with the local DAR chapter and worked in Republican politics in Muskogee County. She was a member of First Presbyterian Church in Muskogee.

Described by those who knew her as gracious, poised and positive, Kit was equally comfortable being a leader or a member of a team. She served with her husband E.L. "Bud" Stewart on many boards and committees during their 54 years of marriage.

Three Rivers Museum will greatly miss Kit Stewart and its board and staff extend their condolences to her family.

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Early Publishing in Oklahoma

by Carolyn Thomas Foreman

The following article is an excerpt from Carolyn Foreman's book, *Oklahoma Imprints*.

IN INDIAN TERRITORY . . . the first printing press was set up at Union Mission by the Reverend Samuel A. Worcester in 1835. The mission was established in 1820 on the west bank of the Grand River on the site now in the southeast corner of Mayes County about five miles northeast of Mazie, Oklahoma.

The first issue from the press was *Isutsi in Naktoku* or *The Child's Book* by Reverend John Fleming, missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. This tiny book in the Creek or Muskogee language, printed by John F. Wheeler, was soon followed by Choctaw and Cherokee almanacs, volumes of hymns, and the Cherokee alphabet.

Printing in Oklahoma actually goes back to the date when the obscure Cherokee, Sequoyah, intrigued by the ability of the white man to convey messages by the "talking leaf," first endeavored to compose an alphabet for his people.

His syllabary is so simple that hundreds of the Cherokee people were soon able to read and it was to satisfy their demand for reading matter . . . that the Cherokee National Council decided to buy a printing press. It was the appearance of the *Cherokee Phoenix* in the Sequoyah alphabet that caused the remarkable awakening of the Cherokee Nation.

Elias Boudinot, the editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* [was described] as an "intelligent, public-spirited Cherokee" who "labored with much zeal and ability

for the good of his people."

Brainerd Mission was established in Georgia in 1816 and the Reverend Samuel Austin Worcester who arrived there in October, 1825, was to devote the remaining thirty-four years of his life to the translation of the Gospels and other works for the Indian nations.

When the Cherokee National Council appropriated money for the establishment of a printing press Elias Boudinot went to the northern states and applied for aid for the project. He received abundant help and Mr. Worcester went to Boston in the summer of 1827 to supervise the making of the matrices for Sequoyah's syllabary, to have the type cast, and to buy a printing press. A font of English type was also procured.

The *Cherokee Phoenix* was the first aboriginal newspaper in the United States and the printing office was a log house, twenty by thirty feet. The press, shipped to Augusta by boat, had to be transported two hundred miles overland to New Echota.

Elias Boudinot was only twenty-seven years old when he became the editor of the Cherokee national paper. The first printers . . . were John Foster Wheeler and Isaac H. Harris and they arrived in New Echota in December, 1827. As they did not understand the Sequoyah characters Worcester and Boudinot stood by and handed out the type as it was set.

The first copy of the *Cherokee Phoenix* was issued February 21, 1828. The *Phoenix* was published for about six years when it was suspended by the authorities of Georgia who imprisoned Mr. Worcester and Mr. Wheeler as part of

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The Three Rivers Area

What makes up the Three Rivers Area?

It is defined to include Muskogee County, all the counties that border Muskogee County . . . Cherokee, Haskell, Mayes, McIntosh, Okmulgee, Sequoyah and Wagoner Counties.

The Three Rivers Museum hopes to collect and preserve historical artifacts from this entire region.

Contact the museum if you have something to donate at 686-6624.



Early Oklahoma Publishing

Friends of the Thomas- Foreman Home

- Roy & Lin Barmore
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the campaign for driving the Cherokees out of Georgia.

The last edition of the paper was printed May 31, 1834. Elias Boudinot was the editor from February 21, 1828 to August 1, 1832, when Chief John Ross appointed Elijah Hicks to succeed him. The interest in the Cherokee newspaper was very great and people ordered copies from all over the country, while the *London Times* exchanged with it on equal terms.

As soon as the Indians became interested in the Christian religion, the desire to read in their own language led to an overwhelming demand for books, and the press at New Echota was kept busy. The Gospel of Matthew, a collection of hymns, an almanac, tracts, and many other books

were translated by Worcester and Boudinot and printed in the Cherokee characters, while a spelling book and edition of hymns in the Choctaw language were eagerly sought.

Dr. Worcester and Boudinot, familiar with the great advance made by the Indians after the installation of the printing press at New Echota, determined to resume the work as soon as possible after the Cherokees were settled in their new home. Worcester secured a press, type and paper and shipped them aboard a steamboat when he commenced his journey to join the Indians.

His plans were temporarily interrupted by the sinking of the boat which carried down the press and all of his books and household effects. The press was salvaged but the print paper

Join the Friends of the Home

Your donation to Friends of the Thomas-Foreman Home will help us maintain this Muskogee treasure. All money sent to the Thomas-Foreman Home is kept separate from Three Rivers Museum funds. Please complete the form at right and mail to:

Friends of the
Thomas-Foreman Home*
1419 W. Okmulgee Ave.
Muskogee, OK 74401

Thank you!

*Friends is a 501c3 corporation. Your contribution is tax deductible.

Yes, I want to support the Thomas-Foreman Home!

Name _____

Address _____

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Please mark your donation level below. Donors will receive free admission to the Thomas-Foreman Home.

- ___ \$20 Individual ___ \$30 Family
- ___ \$100 Builder ___ \$250 Friend
- ___ \$500 Sustainer

Make checks payable to Friends of the Thomas-Foreman Home.



Where Is the Three Rivers Museum?

The museum is located in downtown Muskogee at 220 Elgin. Take Hwy 69 to Okmulgee Ave. Then east on Okmulgee Ave. to 3rd St. Then go south on 3rd St. to Elgin.

We're on the Web!

Stay up to date with Museum News and Special Events by visiting our website at www.3riversmuseum.com

Early Oklahoma Publishing

was lost. This primitive press was set up at Union Mission, five miles northeast of the present Mazie, Oklahoma, in the summer of 1835, and there the first printing in the future state of Oklahoma was done.

All the newspapers started in the two territories were important, as they are a part of the history of the state of Oklahoma.

Many towns have changed their names and some newspapers were started in villages where there were no post offices. Papers were launched with high hopes in boom towns or in projects started by railroads or real estate companies and, as prosperity failed to materialize, the editors folded their tents and silently stole away.

It [is] difficult to learn the exact date of the founding of many of the papers, as after a few years and the changing of editors the date advertised as the one when the paper was established was rarely correct.

While the facts given in the newspaper directories are limited, much has been found in them that otherwise would not have been available, as some of the towns have disappeared from the map and are forgotten by all but a few pioneers who were personally interested in them.

The editors moved from place to place, sometimes establishing a new paper every few years. Many times papers were advertised as independent, Republican or Democratic at the same time in different [directories].

The newspaper business was overcrowded at first and many consolidations and suspensions were inevitable.

The early editors of Indian and Oklahoma territories were like the men who

formed Roosevelt's famous Rough Riders: "Some they had diplomas and for some was warrants out." These men frequently turned from publishing papers to the practice of law or medicine and a number of them became bankers almost overnight.

The fortitude and versatility of the pioneer editors were remarkable and the hardships suffered by them almost unbelievable. With a small hand press which could be transported from place to place in a wagon, or even a wheelbarrow in an emergency, these plucky men issued their papers from tents, wagons, sawmills, or abandoned school houses.

Men with a few hundred dollars would erect a small wooden building as an office and often this served for many years, until the financial condition of the publisher improved.

Phases of United States history can be traced by the names of political parties borne by newspapers started to advocate the principles of such organizations as the Free Silver party, and the People's party. The editorial policy of a paper sometimes changed to be more in harmony with the political party in power.

In November, 1887, a proposal was made for the formation of a press association in the Indian Territory, which then included all of Oklahoma. Nine editors were present at the first meeting held in Muskogee, March 19, 1888.

The Oklahoma Press Association sponsored the formation of the Oklahoma Historical Society at Kingfisher May 27, 1893 and this institution is the great repository of the newspapers of Oklahoma. The vast collection of 20,000 volumes of newspapers is one of which many an older state might be proud. ▼

The Three Rivers Museum has been established to tell the complete story of the founding, settlement and development of the Three Rivers area of Oklahoma. The museum will actively seek to collect, preserve, research, exhibit and interpret a collection of historic artifacts. We will serve the visitors and residents of the area through these efforts as well as through educational programs and special events. The Three Rivers Museum hopes its work will establish a respect for the region's past and will contribute quality and value to its future.

Early Towns Were Rough and Ragged

THREE CONGRESSIONAL acts had a great impact on the Three Forks area. First was the Indian Removal Act of 1830 that forced the Five Civilized Tribes to move to Indian Territory.

Next was the Curtis Act of 1898 that allowed towns in Indian Territory to incorporate for the first time. The third was the Enabling Act of 1906 that combined Indian Territory with Oklahoma Territory for the purpose of forming the State of Oklahoma.

The Curtis Act, adopted by Congress in June 1898, brought sweeping changes to Indian Territory. It abolished the tribal court system and set up a federal judicial system in Indian Territory with three districts.

The Northern judicial district was headquartered in Muskogee and served the Cherokee, Creek and Seminole Nations and the smaller tribes of the Quapaw Agency. A U.S. jail and U.S. clerk's office were also located in Muskogee for the Northern judicial district.

The Curtis Act made provision for the incorporation of towns in Indian Territory. It allowed town lots to be laid out, surveyed and platted and provided for fee simple title to those town lots for all individuals (not just tribal members).

Once title to a town lot was obtained, there was to be no limitation on the right to sell or mortgage the lot.

Until this time, the lack of ability to clearly own a lot in a town limited the ability of towns to grow and develop and to regulate themselves by laws and taxes.

As hateful as taxes seem to us today,

imagine what it would be like to live in a town that had no authority to levy taxes or provide for any public services. The early towns of Indian Territory had no taxes – they also had no paved streets or sidewalks, no public water or sewer system, no streetlights and no public education.

With the Curtis Act came paved streets, water works, sidewalks, electric lights and public school systems. Incorporated towns now had the right to regulate town affairs by ordinance, to create public schools and maintain them with taxes.

People in Indian Territory still couldn't vote for President or Congress, but they could vote for mayors and town councilors.

Territorial towns had been slow to grow before the Curtis Act of 1898. With no method to incorporate or provide for a municipal government, they grew without a plan, without a survey and street plat, without any regulations.

Streets were often little more than crooked alleys. People built homes or businesses wherever they wanted because title to a surveyed lot was unavailable. Those early towns had a rough and ragged appearance.

But by 1900 most of the larger towns of the Territory had incorporated, formed a municipal government, platted town property and started schools. The population of towns in Indian Territory in 1900 was estimated at 6,500 for Ardmore, 5,000 for Muskogee, 2,800 for Wagoner, 2,500 for Tulsa, 1,500 for Tahlequah and 800 for Eufaula. ▼

People in Indian Territory couldn't vote for President or Congress, but they could finally vote for mayors and town councilors.



Thanks to These Museum Members

We would like to welcome all our new members and thank those who have renewed their membership. We appreciate your support of the Three Rivers Museum.

Since 1995

Lin & Linda Moore

Since 1998

Richard Carr
Mildred Cousins
Stephen & Charlotte Crank
Andy & Audrey Ewing
Gerakline Farris
Pat Ferry
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Since 2004

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Bob & Carolyn Gibbs
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Diana Kindell
Odie & June Smith
Rick & Sue Tolbert
Diane Walker

New in 2005

Dorothy Gray
Billy Greenwood
Peggy Turnquist

Keep History Alive! Become A Museum Member.

Be a part of preserving history for future generations. Become a Three Rivers Museum member today. An annual membership provides you with the quarterly journal, free admission to the museum and a 10% discount on purchases in the museum gift shop. Three Rivers Museum is a 501c3 entity. Your donation is tax deductible.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please complete this form and mail with your check made payable to the Three Rivers Museum.

- Individual Membership \$25
- Family Membership \$35
- Builder Membership \$100
- Sponsor Membership \$250
- Sustainer Membership \$500

Clip or copy and mail to: Three Rivers Museum
220 Elgin, Muskogee, OK 74401

My check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

Contact Us

The Three Rivers Museum is always looking for historical artifacts pertinent to the Three Rivers area of Oklahoma.

To make a donation, please call us at 686-6624.

Museum Hours:

Wed. thru Sat.
10:00 a.m. to
5:00 p.m.

Call about group reservations and rates

686-6624

♦♦♦

Suggestions?

Three Rivers Museum is your museum. Tell us what you think about the museum and the quarterly journal. Tell us what you would like to see in the future. You can help us make Three Rivers Museum better with your ideas and input.

Three Rivers Trivia

Test Your Knowledge of Three Rivers History

Questions:

1. Where is the Doughboy statue pictured at right located?
2. Which of the Three Rivers was once called the Six Bulls?
3. What was the name of the congressional act that joined Indian and Oklahoma Territory to form one state?
4. What was the first Presbyterian Mission in the Creek Nation, I.T.?



Answers:
1. Veterans Hospital in Muskogee 2. Grand River 3. The Enabling Act 4. Kowalew Mission, established 1840

Recent Acquisitions

The Three Rivers Museum continually receives artifacts relating to the history of the Three Forks region. Some of our most recent acquisitions speak to the wide variety of historical subjects that the museum can cover.

Charles Scribner — baseball belonging to Joe Magoto and signed by team; photo collage from Camera Arts Shop

Tina Olivares—bronze plaque presented to Lola Irish, a teacher at Franklin School from 1908 to 1928

Mary Gillenwater — collection of WWII-era newspapers

Sarah Turner — vintage clothing dating from the early 1900s to 1950s belonging to Christina Haugland

We cannot list every item, but wish to give you a small sampling of what we have received. We are grateful to every donor who has shared an artifact with us.

New in the Whistle Stop Gift Shop

S Is for Sooner
by Devin Scillian

This rhyming alphabet book about Oklahoma is a great way to teach children about the great things to be found in the Sooner State.

♦♦♦

We also carry a wide array of other books on local history by local authors. Come by and see our selection!

♦♦♦

Our Recipes & Remembrances cook-book makes a great Christmas gift!

Museum members receive a 10% discount! Show your membership card and ask for your discount when you visit.